

**THE TRUTH ABOUT 1984**  
**DELHI VIOLENCE –**  
**REPORT TO THE NATION**

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# A Brief

## Truth about Delhi Violence : Report to the Nation

### Citizens for Democracy

This report came out after the Congress party's landslide victory in the Lok Sabha election held within two months of the carnage. It was brought out in January 1985 by a relatively low profile human rights group called Citizens for Democracy (CFD). In his foreword to the report, Justice V.M. Tarkunde, president of CFD and doyen of the human rights movement in the country, said that "it has the advantage of being prepared when passions have cooled down and when the events could be considered in retrospect."

The distance does seem to have helped as CFD's report was the first one to discern and declare categorically that the holocaust of November 1984 could hardly be described as a communal riot. The report showed that the killing were a one-sided affair in which Sikhs did not play an aggressive role at all. Neither could the violence be attributed, it said, to emotions generated by Indira Gandhi's assassination by two Sikh guards.

The report sought to rebut certain falsehoods propagated by the Congress camp:

That the violence was purely communal i.e. a Hindu vs Sikh affair.

That it was a spontaneous outburst of popular anger against Sikhs.

That the killing of Sikhs began on the very day of the assassination.

The report brought out accounts of witnesses alleging that in the late hours of October 31, 1984, local Congress (I) leaders held several meetings all over Delhi to make plans to kill Sikhs. It also revealed that there was "not a single known known incident of any Sikh having been killed or burnt" on October 31. Whatever disturbances took place on October 31 appear to have been "isolated, sporadic and emotional in nature" and the violence that started the next morning was "systematic, planned and organised in character, and based on cold political considerations."

The conclusions of CFD's "Report to the Nation" are:

The violence was not spontaneous but organised by members of the Congress (I) party.

It was not a communal riot although it endangered communal harmony in its aftermath.

It was meant primarily to arouse passions within the majority community – Hindu chauvinism – in order to consolidate Hindu votes in the election held on December 27, 1984.

## Foreward

A good deal of material has appeared in the Press on the large-scale rioting which took place in Delhi after the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. A very good report has also been published under the joint auspices of the People's Union For Democratic Rights and People's Union For Civil Liberties. The present report is the result of an extensive investigation carried out by a different set of social activists investigation carried out by a different set of social activists. It has the advantage of having been prepared when passions have cooled down and when the events could be considered in retrospect.

Two lessons can be drawn from the experience of the Delhi riots. One is about the extent of criminalisation of our politics and the other about the utter unreliability of our police force in a critical situation.

Although there was a communal element in the violence which erupted in Delhi after the tragic death of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, it could hardly be described as a communal riot. It was, in the first place, an entirely one-sided affair. The Sikhs did not play any aggressive role in the Delhi riots. They were always at the receiving end. They tried in a few cases to defend themselves, but the defence was wholly ineffective. On the other hand, there were a large number of Hindus in every locality who tried to save their Sikh neighbours at considerable risk to themselves. The rioting cannot also be attributed, except marginally, to the feelings generated by the dastardly murder of a popular leader. As this report emphasises, no Sikh was killed in Delhi on October 31, 1984, although the passing away of Mrs. Gandhi became known by about 10.30 A.M. on that day. It was on 1st November and the two succeeding days that a massacre of hundreds of Sikhs and the burning and looting of their shops and houses took place. The rioting was organised by a number of unscrupulous politicians politicians who are habitually associated with anti-social elements and down-right criminals. That is the reason why looting was so extensive and why the killing of Sikhs was attended with unparalleled brutality. Scores of Sikhs in Delhi were literally burnt alive. It is for the top

leaders of the ruling party to consider the ways and means by which the process of criminalization of politics within its ranks can be reversed.

Complaints of police partiality were voiced after all the communal riots which took place in recent years. In the case of Delhi riots, however, the extent of police partiality exceeded all limits. Instead of trying to protect innocent victims, the police, except in a solitary instance, were either utterly indifferent or positively hostile to the Sikhs. The experience of the Delhi riots justifies the view that the law enforcement agency in the country has itself become, to a considerable extent, a lawless force. It is essential that the Government' should devise and carry cut a long-range plan to convert the police force into a law-abiding and law-enforcing agency.

The heinous offences which took place during the Delhi riots, including looting, arson and murder, were all perpetrated in broad daylight. Particulars of some of the offenders are well-known, and the names of many others can be found if a proper investigation is carried out. There is, however, a noticeable apathy in doing this work. Although over two and a half months have elapsed after the riot, not a single case against any offender appears to have been filed before any Delhi Magistrate. The Delhi Administration will be justly blamed if these heinous offences go unpunished.

V. M. Tarkunde - New Delhi (19th January 1985)

## Acknowledgements

We remember with great sorrow Dr. Alfred D' Souza, Director of Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, who passed away suddenly. His untimely death is a great loss to the democratic movement. We record our gratitude to him for his interest, guidance, encouragement in starting and continuing with this investigation.

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We received immense assistance from the news and articles published in the Statesman, Indian Express, Jansatta, Times of India, Hindustan Times, Patriot, Surya India. We are grateful to various journalists who fearlessly reported the news of the Delhi carnage.

## An Explanatory Note

1. The names of all persons accused of having planned or executed or participated in the various incidents of violence described in this Report have been withheld, except where they have been specifically mentioned in a FIR lodged at a police station or in an affidavit before a court of law. Wherever the names have not been disclosed, they have been substituted by cross-marks, i.e. xxxx. We are prepared to disclose all the names of the accused in the event of a judicial inquiry into the Delhi violence.

2. The reference to castes and communities in the Report does not imply any prejudice or aspersion to them but merely constitutes a faithful record of the evidence given by the survivors relating to the identification of the assailants. Furthermore, this reference does not imply that all persons belonging to the specified castes and communities participated in the violence, rather that some of the persons who participated were identified by the victims as belonging to them.

3. This Report mentions the "Nanaksar Report" in several places as one of the valuable sources of information. The "Nanaksar Report" "Nanaksar Report", sponsored by the Nagrik Ekta Manch, New Delhi, derives its name from the fact that it is based on interviews with inmates of the relief camp in Nanaksar Ashram located in the Trans-Yamuna area of the Capital.



# **Demands**

A number of voluntary organizations and responsible citizens made the following demands immediately after the violence:

1. Immediate appointment of a judicial commission to enquire into the role of the administrative machinery and of members of the ruling party in perpetrating this catastrophe on the innocent Sikhs of Delhi;
2. Deterrent punishment to all those found guilty;
3. Adequate compensation to and rehabilitation of widows and orphans and other victims;
4. Overhauling the police machinery with a view to make it a law-abiding force;
5. Restoration of the people's faith in the secular character of the State;

We fully support the above demands. We place this report before the Nation so that justice may be done and shattered faith may be restored.

## Introduction

On the recent violence in Delhi which continued unabated and unchecked for four long fearful days (October 31 to November 3, 1984), after the dastardly assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, good reports and articles have already come out and are coming out. But many more investigative and analytical reports required to obtain a fuller and more complete understanding of the enormity of the tragedy.

Some of the reasons, which prompted the writing of this report were the stories – which were being circulated as facts and generally accepted as true. These said, to pick out a few: (i) the violence was purely communal – a Hindu versus Sikh affair, (ii) it was a spontaneous outburst of people's anger to teach the Sikhs a lesson, and (iii) the killing of the Sikhs had begun on the 31st October itself, accompanied by all kinds of rumors, from celebration by Sikhs to poisoning of Delhi's drinking water, and arrival of Jhelum Express filled with Hindu corpses.

These were not at all true, but we realised that unless these were refuted with irrefutable evidence, the real truth that it was neither communal nor a spontaneous outburst of unbridled rage of the people but organised with the blessings of the party in power, will be lost. After interviewing hundreds of victims talking to several people who had gone through perhaps the worst communal violence in history during the partition of India and some police officials, even connivers with the killers, we have come to the conclusion that the violence was not communal in character. One and all have given us to understand that it was sponsored by the Congress-I members and there was nothing communal about it. We have also gathered conclusive evidence of that involvement.

As regards the spontaneity of the orgy, some people appeared to be angry and they did burn down a couple of Gurdwaras, damaged the property of the Sikhs

and manhandled them but did not kill a single Sikh on 31st October. It is important to remember that in Delhi all this exhibition of people's anger was on the 31st October and in a restricted area round about the All India Institute of Medical Sciences where Mrs. Gandhi's body had been kept. In the States also there was similar evidence of spontaneous outburst of emotion again on the 31st October but there was no killing of any Sikh on that day neither in the Congress-ruled States nor in the non-Congress States. Clearly people's anger had not reached such intensity as to burn a man alive and to gloat over his anguished cries or his burning flesh. It is amazing that the people's anger instead of going down, should have become intensified because everything began to happen from the morning of the next day, November 1.

We have shown in this report that several meetings were held all over Delhi – Central, Outer and Trans- Yamuna area – in the late hours of the 31st October to give final touches, as it were, to the plan already prepared with meticulous care, with an eye to every minute detail that nothing was left out to successfully exterminate the Sikhs. It was as if that brigades were going to attack an enemy territory. From collection of kerosene and incendiary material for dousing the men before they were burnt, to collection of killers both from villages outside the areas of attack as well as from among the more amenable neighbours; from fixing the hour of attack to be launched simultaneously everywhere in Delhi in the forenoon between 9 and 11 A.M. to organising the attack and deciding if it should be repetitive or two-pronged as in a war depending on the size of the mob; from identifying the jhuggis and houses of the Sikhs from amongst the forest of jhuggis and houses occupied by thousands of non-Sikhs to disarming the Sikhs and dissuading them from taking out their Prabhat Pheri; from fixing the sequence of the targets of attack to floating the rumours – everything was done with amazing precision. Gurdwaras were first to be attacked in every area of Delhi according to the plans, because they were supposed to be the arsenals of Sikhs and also the symbol of their collective faith and courage, so they had to be destroyed first. Once these places of worship were in ashes the Sikh houses were looted and set ablaze, then the men were first humiliated by cutting off their hair and shaving off their beard and finally they were delivered to the flames alive; later their women were molested and raped and some were killed also. The rumours were floated in three distinct phases. On October 31, it was to excite

and provoke the anger of the people against the Sikhs that the rumour was floated that they were rejoicing. Secondly, on November 1, after Gurdwaras were burnt down and killing of the Sikhs had taken place, for preventing any sympathy, the second rumour was spread that the Sikhs had poisoned Delhi's drinking water supply. In the third phase, on November 2, since killings had to go on in the Resettlement Colonies, the rumour that the Jhelum Express had come from Punjab loaded with Hindu bodies was floated.

That there was an impeccable pattern according to which the violence erupted and that the mob like disciplined soldiers kept to that model and implicitly obeyed the direction of their masters, the Congress-I functionaries – we feel certain; and all the evidence collected from various persons, voluntary agencies reports and interviews also point to the same conclusion.

We have also collected some valuable FIRs relating to the violence which were lodged by the police themselves at various Police Stations without mentioning the names of the culprits. These FIRs are self-explanatory about the conduct of the police.

We feared that with the passing of time and the dispersal of refugees and other unforeseen events crowded in, many valuable facts will be irrecoverably lost and the desire to probe deep into the cause, the nature and the extent of the violence, so that one could reach at least the fringe of the truth became compelling and so this report had to be completed. In fact the investigation had already started from the very first day of the violence and through various reports of eye witnesses, answers to questionnaires by victims as well as neighbours in 19 areas, several new facts came to light.

With all this wealth of material, we have come to certain broad conclusions: –

The violence was not spontaneous but organised by members of Congress-I.

It was not a communal riot although it has endangered communal amity as its aftermath.

It was primarily meant to arouse passions of the majority community – Hindu chauvinism – in order to consolidate Hindu votes in the coming election.

It was the old colonial divide and rule policy setting one religion against another. The State had forgotten its role of the protector. Instead, it became the collaborator to violence against a minority.

As we said earlier, there is scope or rather need for many more reports to come out. The number of the dead for instance is yet to be ascertained. Even in the Vietnam war, the number of the dead is known but in this 4-day war sponsored by the Government's own party and against one selected section of the country's minorities, none knows for certain how many Sikhs have lost their lives. Those who were dragged out of trains and killed are still not counted as dead by their relatives: they are still waiting for them to come back, hoping and waiting and hoping against all hopes some are on the verge of collapse. Bhagat Singh, for instance, is still searching frantically for his son whom he had sent back from Hardwar to Delhi on November 1. And Bhagat Singh could not be the only one.

Women recognised as recently widowed are 1300 in number; most of them young, the majority illiterate. Once dependent on their husbands, absorbed in their homes and families, who had never gone out to work are today alone facing a merciless world; with kids to look after, no husband to fall back upon, no home to go back to, no Gurdwara or Granthi to turn to for solace and those agonising cries of a burning man piercing her heart – she is like a lost soul; some have lost their minds, many are ill after rape. Can a paltry sum of a few thousands sanctioned as compensation (that too has not reached many) compensate the loss of a human being. Then there are the kids – 4000 orphans

as said by Lt. Gen. J.S. Aurora, many of whom have seen their fathers they adored, dragged out and burnt alive, their mothers they rushed to in trouble, beaten up and raped. These kids with frightened and bewildered eyes, will they ever come out of their trauma and be normal happy jolly children again? This is only one aspect of human life the violence has thrown up – broken homes, shattered children and old desolate parents. Someone someday will write upon.

Another aspect, no less alarming, is the mass exodus of the Sikhs from Delhi – the number could be anywhere round 50,000. Some have left for Rajasthan, some for Punjab, some are migrating abroad creating a vacuum here and imbalancing the economy in Delhi; the charpoy stringers of Kalyanpuri, carpenters and house painters of Sultanpuri, the electricians and mechanics – those wizards with rundown cars, scooters and household gadgets are already in short supply. The daily advertisements suggest that even some of the well-to-do Sikhs are exchanging their Delhi property for property in Punjab. These are just a few aspects picked up at random which no doubt will be studied by sociologists and economists one day.

There is a feeling of insecurity haunting those who are still here, for the criminals whom many had identified and had mentioned their names in various complaints made to various authorities and police, are still roaming around freely and holding out threats.

Can the Delhi violence be looked upon in isolation? Or is it a part of a deteriorating system? The secular foundation of the nation has seldom been under greater stress. Under the facade of secularism and democracy the conditions prevailing here are not very different from those in a Fascist State. The Black Laws and repressive measures are striking at the very roots of basic freedoms and fundamental rights. Secret torture of under-trials inside jails, the tremendous increase in the power of the police, the growing exploitation of the poor, the nexus between the politician, his musclemen and the bureaucrats, are all portents of a Fascist State.

The violence, the terror, the brutal killings have been let loose on the Sikhs. Only yesterday, it was the Sikhs who were the victims, tomorrow it could be you or me. The warning had been given a long time back by a great lover of human rights, Martin Neimoller:

"In Germany, the Nazis came first for the Communists and I did not speak up, because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Jews and I did not speak up, because I was not a Jew. Then they came for trade unionists and I did not speak up, because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics. I was a Protestant and so I did not speak up. Then they came for me, and by that time there was no one left to speak for anyone".

# Chapter I

## Prelude To The Violence

Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, was shot by two of her security guards at 9.18 A.M. on October 31, 1984. She was rushed to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (in South Delhi). Her son Rajiv Gandhi, was away in West Bengal at that time and he returned to Delhi at about 4 P.M. President Zail Singh who was away in the Middle East, returned at about 5 P.M. and at 6.55 P.M. Rajiv Gandhi was sworn in as Prime Minister of India.

The media focused on the fact that the two assassins were Sikhs. As it by design, the entire blame of this grave tragedy was put on these two Sikh individuals and later transferred to the entire Sikh community.

The first incidents, any where in the country, started in Calcutta. According to the Statesman of November 1, a Sikh was beaten up at 11 A.M. near Writers' Buildings and one more Sikh was attacked in the Kidderpore area around the same time. A Sikh was assaulted in front of the Tea Board at about 1.30 P.M. The national Press reported that Congress-I workers and volunteers ran amuck in different parts of Calcutta from the forenoon. The Army was called in to control the situation and it had taken charge of the city by 2.30 P.M.

In Madras city, mobs took over, smashing shop windows, forcing shopkeepers to close down, and burning two buses of the Adarsha Vidyalaya run by the Punjab Association.

In Madhya Pradesh, angry mobs attacked shops and petrol pumps belonging to Sikhs in Jabalpur and Indore. The Army was put on the alert.



In Uttar Pradesh, witness to terrible incidents of arson, loot, and killing from November 1 onwards, particularly in Kanpur, few incidents were reported for October 31. Huge crowds gathered in the streets on getting the news of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination. Shops were closed. But that was all.

In Orissa, Congress-I workers attacked Sikhs in Bhubaneswar and set a private truck on fire. In Kalahandi where much burning and killing took place from November 1, nothing violent happened on October 31, but crowds collected in the Gandhi Chowk in front of the Police Station and the S.P's office. Also continuous Ramayan Path was begun.

In Delhi, incidents started in the afternoon of October 31. Most of these incidents were concentrated in South Delhi and that too in the vicinity of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences where Mrs. Gandhi was admitted after being shot. Majority of the Sikhs in Delhi had always been supporters of the Congress-I, and many of them, as shocked and grieved as anyone else, had also reached All India Institute of Medical Sciences on that tragic morning of October 31. It was only in the late afternoon that their manhandling began. Even the President's car was stoned when it slowed down at the entrance of the hospital. Sikhs were dragged out of buses near the AIIMS by large mobs and beaten. At about 4 P.M. some looting of shops and burning of vehicles started at South Extension and INA market: as reported, it was at the observed instigation and signal of a Congress-I member of the Delhi Metropolitan Council.

The following incident outside the INA market at about 4 P.M. is significant. A Sikh youth's turban was snatched by a small crowd of 30 - 35 persons. They tossed his turban once, and jeered as it came down. They tossed it a second time and as it came down, set it ablaze. Some persons from the INA market came out and whisked away the Sikh youth: he was not harmed.

Then the mob moved to the Safdarjang Airport Flyover. They spotted a car with an elderly Sikh gentleman inside. They stopped the car, dragged out the

Sikh, abused him, roughed him up, hammered the car, but let the Sikh go without any harm to his life.

Around that time, a mail van driven by a Sikh was burnt near the Jor Bagh-Safdarjang Airport crossing. The Singh Sabha Gurdwara at Laxmibai Nagar was set on fire just as the Gurdwara at East Kidwai Nagar, next to All India Institute of Medical Sciences, was burnt down. Two private buses and two shops in the same area were set ablaze. The police watched passively. In the walled city, mobs looted shops belonging to Sikhs, and set timber shops and trucks on fire. By 4 P.M. shutters were down on most of the shops in the Shanker Market, Punchkuin Road, Karol Bagh, Sarojini Nagar and various other shopping centres in Delhi but there was no general phenomenon of loot and arson in the city, as markets remained open in certain areas like Greater Kailash-II.

One significant scene was enacted at the AIIMS at about 5 - 5.30 P.M. Rajiv Gandhi came out with folded hands after seeing his mother's dead body. H.K.L. Bhagat followed him. A huge crowd had collected and were chanting slogans of 'Indira Gandhi Amar Rahe' and 'Khoon ka Badla Khoon se'. Bhagat came out and was reported to have scolded the crowd, "What is the point of assembling here?"

There is not a single known incident of any Sikh having been killed or burnt alive on that day. A rumour concerning Sikhs was doing the rounds on October 31 – of Sikhs celebrating Mrs. Gandhi's assassination by distributing sweets, or dancing the 'bhangra', or by lighting lamps and bursting crackers.

Unsuspectful of any plan against their community, Sikhs in general ventured out of their houses for various errands on the morning of November 1. A large number of Sikhs unmindful of any personal danger had gone to Teen Murti House in the early hours of November 1, just like others, to pay their last homage to their departed leader. As observed on T.V. a large number of Sikhs were seen in the crowded queues, which were passing in front of the dead body of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in the early hours of November 1. However, the

sight of the Sikhs from those queues completely disappeared within an hour and a half of that morning. By that time the plan had been put into operation.

Looking back and comparing the events of the 31st October with the carnage which followed from November 1 onwards, it appears that the 31st October occurrences were isolated, sporadic, and emotional in nature while those which started on November 1, and continued for a full three days were extremely systematic, planned and organised in character: based on cold political considerations. In retrospect, it is perhaps not implausible to suggest that between the time of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination on the morning of October 31 and the time of her son Rajiv Gandhi's accession as the new Prime Minister in the evening of that fateful day, three crucial decisions were taken by someone somewhere in logical sequence (however perverse the logic may appear in a secular, socialist, democratic republic):

Rajiv Gandhi must succeed as the new Prime Minister;

Elections must be held forthwith to cash in on the 'sympathy' factor in favour of Congress - I;

Sikhs as a community must be taught a lesson and demonstratively so – this was felt necessary to consolidate the Hindu public opinion swaying towards Indira Gandhi and her party after the Army action on the Golden Temple in June. The situation changed dramatically after the assassination. The Hindu community's confidence in the ability of the ruling party to give protection to the Hindus against the "militant" Sikhs would have been shattered, the Hindu votes would have swung towards the Opposition, if nothing whatsoever, was done to suggest immediate "retribution" and "badla" for her assassination. So something appears to have been done.

## Chapter II

### The Carnage

While on 31st October, violence in the Capital was confined mainly to areas in South Delhi, and round about the AIIMS, next morning it spread like wild fire all over Delhi. As the Press reported, violence occurred in all the urban zones of Delhi-Centre, East, West, North, South – and even spread to the rural areas of North Delhi.

In the Central areas, the most affected localities were Karol Bagh, Chandni Chowk, Paharganj, Janpath, Connaught Circus, Sadar Bazar and Gurdwara Rakab Ganj.

In the East, violence occurred in various Trans-Yamuna colonies, such as Gandhi Nagar, Shahdara, Trilokpuri, Kalyanpuri, Vinod Nagar, Pandav Nagar, Gamri, Bhajanpura and Nand Nagari.

In the West, the serious trouble spots were Mangolpuri, Sultanpuri, Moti Nagar, Naraina, Patel Nagar, Inderpuri, Punjabi Bagh, Paschim Vihar, Tilak Nagar, Hari Nagar and Janakpuri.

In the North, some of the worst incidents occurred at Ashok Vihar, Jehangirpuri, Gulabi Bagh, Kashmere Gate, Kingsway Camp, and Vegetable Mandi of Azadpur.

The worst affected areas in South Delhi were: South Extension, Safdarjang Enclave, Kalkaji, Khan Market, Greater Kailash, Sarojini Nagar, Maharani Bagh, Defence Colony, Nizammuddin, Bhogal, Hari Nagar Ashram, NOIDA, Okhla Industrial Estate, Kotla Mubarakpur, Panchsheela Enclave, Gulmohar Park, Chittaranjan Park, Lajpat Nagar, and Vasant Vihar.

Hundreds of Gurdwaras were set on fire. Mobs tried to attack even the Gurdwara Rakab Ganj near Central Secretariat and Sheesh Ganj Gurdwara at Chandni Chowk.

Shops owned by Sikhs were looted or set on fire indiscriminately at various places, such as at Azadpur or at Nehru Place near Kalkaji. A big cloth shop, S.M. & Sons, just next to the Khadi Gramodyog in Regal Building in Connaught Circus was set ablaze as was the nearby Marina Hotel.

A number of cinema halls owned by Sikhs were reduced to ashes such as the Janak Cinema, Deep at Ashok Vihar, and Chanderlok in Chittaranjan Park.

Even schools were not spared from arson and destruction such as the Guru Har Kishan Public School in Vasant Vihar, two of its branches at Sarojini Nagar and Loni Road, the Mata Jai School at Ashok Vihar, and the Takshila Public School at Loni Road.

Vehicles appearing to be owned by Sikhs and taxi stands manned by them were destroyed.

The scene at Lohia Hospital on the evening of Thursday, November 1, was an indication of what was happening in the city. Men with stab wounds, pellet injuries, lathi abrasions and others who had been stoned and beaten up were being brought in every minute.

Five people had been brought in dead and as many died later. In one ward alone (ward No. 10), the register showed that 114 men had been brought in till 5 P.M.

Some Sikhs had been brought in from the railway stations. All were dragged out, kicked, and stones lying on the railway track were used to assault them.

All traces of the existence of an effective law and order machinery disappeared as mobs ran riot. The police appeared to be by and large unwilling to handle the situation and the Fire Brigade telephone brought little response. Senior police officers refused to give any authoritative information. No part of Delhi was trouble free. All hell, it appeared, had been let loose.

After visiting several localities spread all over Delhi – places far apart as, for instance, Nizamuddin and Jehangirpuri – and interviewing a large number of survivors and their neighbours, we find that:

Systematic violence, as distinct from sporadic, had erupted in the Capital on November 1 between 9 and 11 O'clock in the morning;

The initial target of attack was the Gurdwara – the supposed arsenal of the Sikhs and the symbol of their collective faith and courage – followed by loot, arson and killing of the Sikhs: first the men, particularly youths, then members of their families;

The duration of violence differed as between the Centre and the Periphery; in centrally located areas of the Capital, for instance, it lasted from morning till evening of November 1, while in more inaccessible Resettlement Colonies of Outer and East Delhi it lasted much longer – between 48 to 72 hours.

Below are the details of some of the localities which were especially examined. These details are classified according to the date, time, target and duration of the violence.

**(a) Jehangirpuri Resettlement Colony (Blocks A, C, D, E, EE, G, I, J and K):**

Before the violence erupted in Jehangirpuri proper on November 1, it began at about 9.15 A.M. at Azadpur near the Sabzi Mandi where a crowd looted 8 trucks laden with fruits parked in front of a Sikh motor mechanic's shop and then burned these down as also the shop. Swelling up in strength the crowd then proceeded to Jehangirpuri, where at around 10 O'clock it first attacked the three Gurdwaras and burnt them one after another, subsequently it started looting and burning the shops, a factory, a petrol station, a number of trucks, scooters and houses all belonging to the Sikhs. Gathering momentum, the violence continued till 6 O'clock in the evening till all the Sikhs they could seize had been killed. A Municipal Councillor, xxxx, was seen inciting the mob. Several persons involved in the violence were recognised by the survivors. One xxxx who resides in K Block had a list of Sikh houses, and once the houses were identified, they were set on fire, the men hiding there were dragged out, beaten up severely and then killed. The violence continued sporadically till November 3 when the Army arrived and rescued the survivors.

**(b) Mongolpuri Resettlement Colony:**

On November 1, at about 10.15 A.M. a crowd of men led by 8 to 10 village leaders collected in front of the Congress-I office; they had come from the direction of the Flyover after having earlier burnt down 2 Sikh factories and a house on their way to Mongolpuri. Inside the Congress-I office sat 50-60 men getting ready to go to Teen Murti House for 'darshan' of the late Prime Minister. The leaders stopped them from going to Teen Murti House, instead they were found moving towards the Gurdwara at Block F which they attacked and burnt down. By then Congress-I sympathisers were brought down from the nearby Pooth village in a DTC bus and the crowd was about 200 strong. Round about 11 A.M. the second Gurdwara was also attacked and burnt down. When 4 houses belonging to the Sikhs were being attacked, the Sikhs resisted with their talwars. The crowd retreated, went back to the Congress-I office and soon the local Congress leader went rushing to the Mongolpuri Police Station to complain against the armed Sikhs. The police suddenly became active and came down. The Sikhs were arrested and were brought to the Police Station, were disarmed there and ordered to go back to their homes. On the way each one of them was slaughtered. The crowd by now was 400-500 strong.

Mr. Gurdeep Singh, President of the Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Block R, Mongolpuri, has given a vivid account of how his two brothers, Mr. Kulwant Singh and Mr. Rattan Singh, were killed and his sister-in-law raped on November 1, in his FIR (No. 176 dated November 11) lodged with the Mongolpuri Police Station. The following persons – Kalia (a scooter driver who lives in Gali No. 6), Seva Ram (a kerosene depot dealer), Shanker, Sambhu and his brother, 2 persons whose father is a vegetable vendor and Goverdhan (of Gali No. 4) – attacked his brothers with arms, dragged them out of the house, assaulted and injured them grievously, poured kerosene oil or some other inflammable substance and burnt them alive. Afterwards, Shanti (a tailor who resides in Gali No. 5, Block O, Mongolpuri) accompanied by 4 others (whose names are not known but they can be identified) criminally assaulted Mrs. Devinder Kaur, wife of Mr. Kulwant Singh, under duress and threat of murder. Mr. Gurdeep Singh has given the names and addresses of the 'murderers and rapists' in his FIR but none of them have been apprehended upto now.

**(c) Budh Vihar:**

According to Mr. Piara Singh of Budh Vihar: "On 1-11-1984 at 12 at noon, Nishan Saheb (flag) of the Gurdwara was thrown down and Gurdwara's property looted, safe and other things taken away. Then, after looting the houses of the Sikhs and setting them afire, they went back. About 3000-3500 people were there. After that the situation calmed down.

"At night, they came again. At about 9.30 P.M. they were beating up a man named Jiti. I had earlier asked my father to go to a nearby house of a Hindu brother. My father and Mokhar Singh's father had gone to a neighbour's house. Leaving Jiti crying and sobbing about 50-60 people rushed to the house where my father was hiding himself. The Hindu brother of that house asked my father to leave the house. My father ran towards the other side. Some people saw him running. - They hit him on the head and dragged him to the street. There about 40-50 men beat him up with lathis. My father became unconscious. They left two men with my father so that if any one would turn up to save him they would beat him. The two men had lathis and rods. Rest of the men went



towards the Nala and shouted, "Is there any son of a snake? Bring him out." After some time, some people came and threw down the dead body into the Nala. Where they beat him, there blood and only blood was to be seen. At 11 O'clock, we came out for patrolling which was started by the members of our locality. I gave up my sleep and started working with them. After sometime, I was surrounded by some people who said that I should be killed because I am a son of a Sikh. One man pitied on-me and said that I should be freed because I never visited a Gurdwara. People left me.

"In the morning, the same man who saved me the night before came to tell me that danger was still there and that I should run away. I set out at the same time. A voice came from behind, A Sardar is going. Catch him. Beat him." I ran towards the other side where I saw a man going by a bicycle. Sitting on his cycle I went to a relative's house in Rani Bagh and when the camps started, I came to the camp at Shakur Pur."

Another account regarding Budh Vihar is provided by Mr. Mohinder Singh, a resident of G-1 Gurdwara at Budh Vihar. He does Katha and Path (recite the prayers and explain their meanings). His son, Satnam Singh, who has been killed, was the priest of the Gurdwara. In the words of Mohinder Singh: "On the morning of the first November, we did not take out the procession (Prabhat Pheri) that we had to take out on the occasion of Guru Nanak's birthday, as we were grieved at the sad demise of our Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. In Phase-II, the recitation of Guru Granth Sahib had started at Kartar Singh's house.

We went there. My duty was from 9 A.M. to 11. A.M. I gave my duty. At 11.30, too much noise started coming. 'The family was asked to terminate the recitation. We stopped. Kartar Singh and I hid ourselves in some Hindu brother's house. At about five in the evening, many people came there and shouted that the Sikhs be brought out. Some people came in and dragged out Kartar Singh. Then they started beating him badly. Ladies started shrieking. They asked us to go. We went out after climbing the wall. Hiding ourselves in the bushes, we reached the Gurdwara at one at night. The Gurdwara, we saw,

was wholly burnt down and the walls had collapsed. We went to Mr. Bakshish Singh's house and hid ourselves there. Next day, my son got up and went to the Gurdwara. People saw him there and burnt him alive. After that I hid myself in Mohinder Singh's house. There were four persons. On 3-11-1984 at 4 O'clock many people come and killed Joginder Singh and Mohinder Singh. I and one other person remained safe. After that, hiding myself I reached Shakar Pur Camp."

**(d) Sultanpuri Resettlement Colony:**

On November 1, round about 3 P.M. the A-4 Block in Sultanpuri was attacked by a 200 strong mob. They were seen coming from the direction of Mongolpuri. The timing of the attack here had to be different from the morning as in all other areas to afternoon because the killing and looting in Nangloi and Mongolpuri and Budh Vihar took a much longer time than planned. The pattern, however, was followed as elsewhere: the mob destroyed the Gurdwara first, then burnt the Granthi, then the looting began and the arson, and finally the male Sikhs were dragged out and killed.

The destruction of this A-4 Block must have been total for the attack continued till past midnight, and after an inter-mission at about 4 A.M. the orgy continued again, unabated till 9 A.M. on November 2.

After destroying A-4 Block the mob was reinforced with people from nearby villages, jhuggis, resettlement colonies and neighbouring Blocks. Congress-I leaders like xxxx and local goondas like xxxx and xxxx from C-2, and the kerosene supplier xxxx from xxxx and police officials xxxx and neighbours xxxx and X X X could be identified by the survivors from P-1 Block.

The killers were from outside – Gujars, jamadars and Bhangis – backed and used by Congress-I ringleaders, local goondas and police. On November 2, the C-4 Block was attacked by a huge mob in themorning. The Sikhs were dragged

out and beaten mercilessly. Some of them came out from other Blocks and in self-defence brought out their swords.

The police were informed. Arriving promptly, they disarmed the Sikhs, arrested some, shot a number of them and ordered the rest of them to go back to their Blocks. Immensely encouraged, swollen in numbers, the mob attacked the Sikhs, pulled them out, doused them with kerosene, burned them alive, with the active encouragement of the police.

The destruction was systematic; shouting no seed of a Sikh would be allowed to grow' the mob did not spare even the little boys. After the C-4 Block, the A-2 Block was also attacked and men burnt alive. The number of widows in Sultanpuri alone is 144. The duration of the attack was, perhaps, the longest in this colony lasting three full days.

As elsewhere, the carnage followed a very definite pattern. First, the houses of the Sikhs were identified; their names ascertained from the ration shops; the oil supplier had the kerosene and other inflammable material ready for distribution; killers were got together both from outside as well as from the neighbourhood; weapons used were iron rods, daggers and axes.

The killings were followed by extensive looting and arson; what was new in this colony was the manhandling and in certain Blocks raping and abduction of young women and girls. The date was adhered to and also the target. As everywhere the survivors mentioned the Congress - I functionaries by name being behind the violence.

#### **(e) Kalyanpuri Resettlement Colony:**

On November 1, at about 9.45 A.M. it was reported in the Gurdwara at Block 36 that a Sikh had been killed near Chand Cinema; the Sikhs assembled there, got nervous but decided to defend the Gurdwara; a little later – round about

10 A.M., a 200-350 strong crowd was seen coming along the road leading to Block 33; it reached the Gurdwara at Block 36 in no time and attacked it. Most of the Sikhs trying to defend it were hacked to death and the Gurdwara was set on fire.

The crowd then surged towards the residential area where some of the Sikhs had fled; on the way the Sikh shops which had already been identified were looted and burnt; then the mob rushed towards the Sikh houses which also had been identified earlier and marked.

The Sikhs resisted the attack and trying to save themselves stood on the roofs of their houses; some of them accompanied by their Hindu neighbours went to Dr. Ashok, their Congress-I Municipal Councillor for help; he refused and would not even allow them to use his telephone to call the police.

By that time, the crowd had swelled up to 500 and had rounded Block 13; instead of breaking open each house in that Block they made holes on the back wall of the houses and entered the rooms in large numbers; overpowering the Sikhs, killed 32 of them and looted and burnt their houses.

Then they went to Blocks 12 and 11 and killed 6 more men there and burnt their houses.

Violence continued till the afternoon of November 3, when the dead had been cremated and no other evidence of death was left; except in the silence of death and the charred remains of wood where once houses had stood.

And there was Nanaki with her four tiny kids showing us her one precious possession – the single blood-smeared finger of her husband who had been burnt alive before her eyes and his hand slashed off so that they could grab the gold ring he still had on his finger.

**(f) Trilokpuri Resettlement Colony:**

The violence began on November 1 around 9.45 A.M. A crowd of 400-500 saw a Sikh on the main road. The scooter of a passerby was stopped, petrol was taken out and the Sikh was soaked in petrol and burnt. At that time, in front of the main road outside Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara of Block 36, two policemen were seen.

A lecturer resident of Mayur Vihar, who got down from a DTC bus at the corner of Trilokpuri and walked the distance to his house, approached the policemen and requested them to call more policemen to protect the Sikhs from the crowd which was big and determined. The policemen then moved away.

When the policemen disappeared, the crowd attacked the Gurdwara, killed six Sikhs including the Granthi of the Gurdwara and his son who were trying to defend it and put them to the fire, using kerosene and tyres. The Gurdwara was in flames within minutes. The chief assailant was one whose mother is an important functionary of the local Congress-I unit. The crowd then surged ahead on the road to Sector 32 from two directions. By 11 A.M. the crowd reached the two corners of Sector 32.

Some persons tried to pacify it without success. XXXX of Congress-I was apparently leading the crowd on the side of the open fields, where transmission towers are located. On the other side is located a Mosque, which was occupied by many persons some of whom were identified as local sweepers. The brickbats started from the Mosque, the Sikhs tried to defend from their roof tops.

The crowd from the side of the open field was deterred because five houses of Muslims sympathetic to Congress-I stood as buffer, their members trying to appeal for peace. Four policemen near the Mosque did not intervene. Meanwhile a crowd from Chilla Gaon, which is about half a kilometer in the

east, had attacked the Gurdwara of Block 32 near the Balmiki Temple. The Sikhs there defended it till 3.30 P.M. At that time two Sikhs were seen running towards the open fields, crossing the barbed wire and hiding themselves in the tall grass. The crowd set the field on fire at several corners. There was no way left to those Sikhs and they were burnt alive.

As soon as the Chilla Gaon crowd burnt the Gurdwara and surged towards Block 32, the resistance collapsed. All male members were killed; except six, one of them an old man of 65. Women and children were forced out of the houses and the killed persons were burnt with cots and kerosene. Some were dragged out and the houses were set on fire.

190 houses in five rows were burnt, nothing remained inside. Human hair and blood stains could be detected even on the 11th November. The unofficially estimated death toll is 450 but the official figure is 95.

Some girls were picked up by villagers from Chilla Gaon. On 7th November, 6 girls were recovered by the local police. After 4 P.M. on the 1st the crowd had swelled to 2000, the residents of neighbouring Blocks had also joined in those nefarious activities. But some Muslims of Block 32 as well as of other Blocks saved some Sikh males.

Our eye-witness Joginder Singh was saved by Kadir Ahmed of Block 32. Joginder Singh escaped at 5 A.M. on 2nd morning, after shaving his beard and trimming his hair and dressed up as a goonda. He ran away to his relations in the city and returned on 7th November and reported to the police.

The riot continued unabated till it stopped in the afternoon of November 3. There was not much then to do either. The picture was one of utter desolation, everywhere there was the stench of blood and rotten flesh and dead bodies were strewn all over, piles of burnt hair lay by their side. It was the day of dogs and vultures.

**(g) Hari Nagar Ashram (New Delhi):**

Violence began around 11 O'Clock in the morning on November 1; a huge mob over 1000 strong split into two and proceeded to destroy simultaneously Bala Saheb Gurdwara and the Sikh pocket in the Shalimar Theatre area.

The Gurdwara was badly damaged, most of the houses on the Bala Saheb Gurdwara Road were reduced to ashes; a young man was dragged out of his house and doused with kerosene and was burnt alive on the road. His 80 year-old mother had gone off her mind. In Shalimar Theatre 45 to 50 trucks, cars, scooters, 2 buses and shops, 8 houses with all their belongings were set on fire.

Today the survivors have been reduced to paupers. A Government contractor of electronics and his two young sons were beaten to death. Harbhajan Singh, a truck repairer, was dragged out of his house in Sunlight Colony, his thigh was cut off first and then he was thrown into the flames.

For three days, dogs could be seen sniffing at the charred remains. But for the protection Hindu neighbours gave to the Sikh young men – many more would have been butchered. Two women gave birth to premature infants, they were also taken care of and sent to Jivan Nagar Hospital.

Congress-I leaders, particularly XXXX, the Municipal Councillor and his cronies XXXX and XXXX were active. A public carrier XXXX supplied tons of pebbles which were used to stone the buildings - even to-day the houses show big holes. The construction labour also joined in the game of brick batting.

What stands out is the behaviour of the Police- all appeals to them to control the mob fell on deaf ears; one of them was heard telling to an old women of 70 who had asked him to get a little milk for an infant "yes, yes feed it for half an

hour, we are going to finish off your infants") Adhe ghante ke liye dudh pillao, tumhare bacchon ko katenge).

The violence which began in the morning, stopped at night on November 1, lasting about 8-10 hours. On November 2, the Army was posted there and several people were rescued. And this happened not in far off colonies across the Yamuna but right inside the Capital, hardly 3 kilometres from the Rashtrapati Bhawan.

#### **(h) Nizammudin:**

Round about 10 O'clock in the morning of November 1, violence erupted in Nizamuddin; 86 trucks owned by Sikhs and their houses were burnt down. Sikh taxis in the taxi stand were also set on fire. Coming inside the residential area the mob set on fire the house of a Sikh in 'C' Block.

There is little doubt that the house had been identified earlier. The mob by then 1000 strong, marched to Bhogal to beat to death six Sikhs on the Flyover in presence of 20 policemen who just looked on. The mob was joined by white kurta-pyjama clad young men who came in two buses. In a big barat like procession preceded by an oil tanker and followed by a police jeep, the crowd passed through Bhogal Market and burnt any number of cars, scooters, looted Sikh shops on Jangpura Road and damaged the Bhogal Singh Asabha Gurdwara.

The Hindu residents prevented its being burnt down, they were afraid that their own houses would catch fire if the oil tanker had been used to douse the Gurdwara building for setting it ablaze. Five policemen were seen drinking tea brought to them by XXXXX, XXXX, and XXXX, all of whom were identified by the Khalsa of the Gurdwara as being bad characters of the locality.



(i) Eye-witness report of November 1 by a student who travelled by Mudrika Bus from Punjabi Bagh to AllMS, then to Kalkaji, starting at 9.30 A.M., reaching Kalkaji by 11 A.M.: "At 9.30 A.M. on November 1, when I boarded the Mudrika Bus from Punjabi Bagh in order to go to AllMS/Safdarjang Hospital, the atmosphere seemed to me to be rather quiet and peaceful. But as soon as the bus reached Raja Garden, a few goonds-looking characters led by a white kurta clad man jumped into the bus and started looking for Sikh passengers.

Since there were no Sikhs in this bus, it was allowed to proceed undisturbed. At Naraina on the way, I saw a few men dressed in kurta pyjamas, beating a Sikh young man mercilessly. The Sikh youth in order to save his life, ran into a nearby sweet-shop but he was not allowed to enter. All this I could see clearly from the bus..... when I reached Kalkaji at 11 am (on November 1) I noticed that in quite a few places shops had been looted and doors and windows had been smashed. A few policemen, some of whom were armed, stood silently near Gali No. 14, Gobindpuri. In fact the policemen were occasionally making -- instigative statements.

(j) "At 11.30 A.M. on November 1, I was sitting and chatting at a friend's place in Kalkaji DDA Colony when we heard a big noise. Coming out, we saw a lady advancing towards us shrieking very loudly, the same lady whom I had earlier seen shouting and shrieking at Kalkaji. "Burn the Sikhs, kill them, then only the dogs will learn what can be the result of murdering the leader of the nation." On asking one learnt that she was a well-known local activist of the Congress-I. She went away shouting. On her two sides, were walking certain people who looked like professional gangsters and who were armed with iron rods and lathis etc. As the Congress-I lady left, some of the bad characters put the local Gurdwara ablaze.

One persons had some explosive material in his hands which he started throwing successively. The mob took about half an hour to do all this. When they got convinced that the Gurdwara had burned, they went away; about half an hour later when the local people felt that the bad characters had gone away, the non-Sikh people got together and, women and youth alike, they started taking out things from inside the Gurdwara and saved some of the valuables."

## Chapter III

### Pattern: A Method In The Madness

A clear and distinct pattern of violence emerged on analyzing the various reports and interviewing a number of survivors. There was a method in the madness that overwhelmed Delhi after the assassination.

#### A. Meetings on 31st October Night:

There is evidence that in several areas local Congress-I leaders held meeting on the night of October 31st and these preceded attacks and killings of the Sikhs.

In Vinod Nagar (East Delhi) according to a survivor Ram Singh (name changed), a taxi driver, a prominent Congress-I local leader of Vinod Nagar called a meeting in the evening of 31st October which was attended by xxxx, xxx (Bhaiswala), xxx (a known smuggler) and a few others; the meeting went on till midnight. These men along with 200-250 residents attacked his house early in the morning of November 1, broke down the door with iron rods and seeing all three of them (Ram Singh and his 2 sons) still sleeping, xxx told his friends to pour kerosene on them and burn them to death. Ram Singh woke up, took out his kirpan and leapt out through the broken door-xxxx stood back and all the others fled. A Hindu neighbour from Himachal Pradesh helped him to escape.

Surjit Singh- a Sevdar of a local Gurdwara in Vinod Nagar area (Nihang Singh Gurdwara, Pandav Nagar) had left his house early in the morning and thus escaped death but his wife (Tej Kaur) and their 9 years old daughter Minoo, his friend Nahan Singh and Nahan's wife were all burnt alive on the morning of November 1. This sudden unbearable loss had nearly unhinged Surjit Singh's mind when we saw him in the Camp.

(b) In Khajori-Bhajanpura (C Block)-Gamri area in Trans Yamuna one xxxx, a prominent Congress-I leader of the locality who is a Gujar by caste called a meeting on the night of 31st October which was attended by his son xxxx, xxxx (kerosene depot operator), xxx (Principal of a local school in Bhajanpura) and made an exhaustive list of local Sikh families who were to be attacked on November 1 by them.

According to the Nanaksar Report "what happened thereafter was sheer unspeakable horror. In a space of two and a half days among the families who took refuge in Nanaksar, 155 people had been slaughtered. These numbers, which are but from a single camp – make mockery of the Government's estimate of the deaths in the Capital. 45% of those killed were from Nandnagari, most of whom were from Block A-1/3, the Punjabi Mohalla and Block E. Gamri and Bhajanpura-mostly C Block-accounted for another 30%. The dead left behind them were 107 widows, 72% from the ages 20-45 years."

(c) In Kallekhan Basti near Nizammuddin a meeting was held on 31st October night over cups of tea and lasted till late at night. It was presided over by a Congress-I elected leader and some gujars including a well known Vaid-all Congress-I sympathizers attending it, finalizing their plan for November 1.

## **B. Political Organisers:**

Throughout the Trans-Yamuna area in the catchment area, there were three types of people who were behind-the-scene organizers, those who identified Sikh households, mobilized hoodlums for mayhem and supplied fuel for arson. According to the survivors, these came from among (a) local level Congress-I politicians and hoodlums at different hierarchical levels, (b) ration shop owners and (c) kerosene depot owners, who have invariably been members of the same party or closely linked to local Congress-I politicians (Nanaksar Report).

According to our Survey, not an insignificant proportion of victims (19 p.c.) and their neighbours (20 p.c.) said that the attack was motivated by Congress-I political leaders. And a higher proportion of the victims (42 p.c.) identified Congress-I sympathizers as assailants.

It was reported that prominent among the people who were inciting the mob to violence in Sultanpuri, one was xxxx a Congress-I functionary and a close associate of xxxx, xxxx allegedly went round the area later building up a climate of fear among the people by spreading the story that the Sikhs had poisoned the water supply. He was allegedly leading the attack. There was another one xxxx of the Jamadars, xxxx a narcotic seller and xxxx.

Well dressed young men coming in Matador vans or cars or buses later identified as important functionaries of Congress-I or elected leaders belonging to Congress-I have been responsible for mobilizing and directing the mob towards Sikh houses, shops, factories and Gurdwaras. Refugees from Patparganj, Khichripur, Kalyanpuri in Pandav Nagar Gurdwara separately interviewed mentioned that a cream coloured Matador (xxx) owned by one xxxx drove up to Ganesh Nagar (Pandav Nagar Complex) carrying 12 men, one of whom was xxxx, a Congress-I Councillor; they distributed to the crowd assembled there lathis, revolvers and rifles - which they had brought with them - and were heard telling them before leaving 'Use these on Sardars'.

The list giving the names of these 12 men was given to Mr. H.K.L. Bhagat, Union Minister, to Mrs. Tajdar Babar the Congress-I Metropolitan Councillor and President of the Delhi Pradesh Committee of Congress-I and also to Mr. Bedi, an official in the Ministry of Defence. No action was taken against those named.

In Bhogal, it was xxxx, a Congress-I worker and xxxx, owner of a sweet-shop- a Congress-I sympathizer - who were seen directing the crowd to Sikh shops in Bhogal Market which were all looted.

In Mangolpuri, a white Ambassador was seen driving up near the flyover from Mangolpuri. Sitting inside was xxxx, a prominent Congress -I man who had masked his face as not to be recognized (but he was recognized all the same).

He called the crowd to his car and gave them some advice and then left; soon after that the Gurdwara went up in flames in the morning of November, 1.

In Vinod Nagar East two buses full of khadi kurta-pyjama clad young men drove up from the direction of the UP Border and led the local miscreants already assembled there, first to loot and burn Sikh shops and houses and then to burn alive human beings; genocide was perpetrated on November 1 in that small East Delhi colony. On 2nd November, 35 lawyers had visited some riot-affected areas. Mr. Ram Jethmalani's eye-witness account of the after-math of Vinod Nagar killings is given in Chapter IV on 'Nature of Violence'.

In Jehangirpuri, xxxx's name, a Congress-I leader, has been reported, it has come up again and again as the one who incited the mob; once his henchman, xxxx had identified the Sikh houses he prodded them on to loot and burn these down. That politics of criminilisation was being played by the Congress-I functionaries has been conclusively proved.

According to the affidavit of Gurdeep Kaur - "On November 1 in Trilokpuri about 500 peopole came to Block 32. In such a crowd it was not possible to recognize everyone. Since I have lived in Trilokpuri for 8 years now I did recognize a few of the mob who had killed my family.

They were Tello, Manu (alleged to be a smuggler), Jagga and his wife Draupadi, Kishori Jamadar (sells pork), Rampal Saroj (Congress-I goonda who participated fully in looting and murder and also supervised the killing of several people), Roop Lal and his 3 sons who are thieves. Rampal Saroj came to our lane and assured us that Sikhs will not be harmed. He said that there was no need to be afraid; being the local leader he told the Sikhs not to get out of their houses because that would be safer. I was shocked that this traitor had deceived us and was a part of the mob. Rampal Saroj was leading the killers and the assurance he had given us was just a trick of his so that no Sikh would leave the house. Within 5 hours he brought the goondas, showed them each Sikh

household, saw to it that the Sikhs were pulled out, and in his presence many Sikhs were beaten and burnt alive."

### **C. Method of Identification:**

Identification of Sikh shops and houses was done in a systematic way by (i) persons moving in scooters, in Matadors, or even on foot as if making a survey of the place; (ii) checking up names and addresses of Sikh students from school registers; (iii) with the help of ration cards and voters' lists; and (iv) by marking Sikh houses – Nazi fashion, as in Hitler's Germany. Nanaksar Report mentions: "xxx and xxx the owner of a shop which stands in the Bhajanpura Main Market, went from door to door of Sikh houses in Khajori Colony, Gamri and Bhajanpura marking them thus- X, S, (X), (S)- the houses were thereby marked for arson, looting and murder."

### **D. Collection of Incendiary Material:**

Kerosene was collected from;

Jhuggi dwellers (as in Nizamuddin Basti) by threatening them,

Ration shop owners too willing to help,

Kerosene depot owners.

Nanaksar Report says: "Several sources jointly and individually have pointed to xxxx, xxxx, xxxx and xxxx as the ones who supplied kerosene oil by the bucket-full on the 1st November. Further it was strongly alleged that xxxx under the order of xxxx also supplied phosphorous in the buckets of kerosene to aid the process of arson (but who supplied phosphorous to xxxx?)..... None of the witnesses spoke of the "safed cheez" being handled, everyone said it was in kerosene buckets and seen only when the kerosene was spilled on to floors." The "white powder" was used in Jehangirpuri also.

According to the survivors in Sultanpuri the material used for arson was kerosene, some sort of liquid burns and also some kind of powder which explodes or catches fire.

Diesel oil and petrol were collected from petrol pumps, passing motor vehicles, cars and scooters.

#### **E. Collection of mob:**

1) In Hari Nagar Ashram, miscreants, 400 to 500 strong, arrived by Delhi-Palwal Shuttle Express from Faridabad at 9.45 A.M. and also by Kutub-Narmada Express at 11 A.M., armed with lathis, iron rods, soda water bottles and drums of kerosene. They joined the local mob, 700 strong, who had come from nearby J.J. colonies.

These people were led by xxxx, a Congress-I local leader followed by his friends xxxx, xxxx and xxxx. The mob now over 1000 strong split in two, one group attacking the Bala Saheb Gurdwara and the Shalimar area - the sikh pocket.

2) In Jehangirpuri also the pattern of collection of the mob is the same – neighbours as well as villagers from Balaswa, Ramgarh and Badli.

3) In every Resettlement Colony 'outsiders' were brought in buses from villages if they were far off, otherwise people came on foot and joined the local people.

4) In Sultanpuri the mob came from nearby Pooth Village and some were bad character and local goondas from block C-2, C-3, C-4, C-6. All their names are with us. If and when called for they would be produced.

5) Inquiries in Punjabi Bagh and Madipur colonies involving victims and looters, showed that the person leading the mobs were those who were used by ruling party to mobilise support.

The type of areas which the Lt. Governor identified at his Press briefing on November 4, 1984 are similar to those from which crowds were collected by the ruling party both for the kisan rally three years ago and the bank loans function in January 1984.

It was Mongolpuri, Sultanpuri, Tirlokpuri and Kalyanpuri from where Congress-I politicians found their crowds. "And it was Jehangirpuri where the mobs killed several persons of a minority community on suspicion that they had not voted for the Congress-I in civic elections in Delhi in January 1983." (Statesman, November 5, 1984).

#### **F. Composition of Mob:**

a. Anti –social elements – some of them dacoits with police record such as xxxx, xxxx, xxxx, xxxx, xxxx (a mob leader as well), and so on. In Jehangirpuri there are persons who are willing to testify against these people in court;

b. Scheduled caste – Khatiks, Chamars, Purbiyas, Jamadars, bhangis (there is a great deal of resentment against the bhangis, most of whom rear pigs);

c. Backward castes – Jats, Gujars, Ahirs, most of them erst-while land owners; their land was acquired by the government for setting up new colonies. They have become hostile to the Sikhs because they live in these colonies.

Weapons used by them – in addition to lathis and iron rods, daggers and axes were used extensively.



## **G. The Type of Killers:**

Generally, Jat villagers from outskirts, Jamadars, bhangis and lumpens have been accused as killers by the survivors.

The Congress -I ring leaders paid Rs. 1000/- to each killer as boasted by the killers themselves who invariably used to be heavily drunk before killing. Some witnesses have accused some policemen also of killing as in Sultanpuri or in Bhopal. Even today, two and a half months after the carnage, the refugees are afraid of three categories of human beings: Gujars, police and politicians.

As mentioned in the Nanaksar Report : 'xxxx in these colonies is probably the most vicious of the killers – a general hoodlum of the Gamri, Bhajanpura and Khajori area, a class associate of xxxx, and always carries a revolver; he not only planned but actively participated in the killings and looting in Gamri and in C Block, Bhajanpura.' Another Gujar, xxxx doodwalla who supplied milk to Janata flat No. xxx Nand Nagari killed the male Sikh in the flat.

## **H. Method of Attack:**

Depending on the size of the mob, attacks were simultaneous or sequential.

Where the mob was very large, as in Hari Nagar Ashram or again in Tirlokpuri, it split into 2 groups and the pattern of simultaneous attack was observed; but where the mob was smaller, 150-250 persons, the pattern was sequential; taking it easy, first Gurdwaras were destroyed one after another and then the Sikh houses and shops already identified were looted and finally the sikh men were humiliated, their hair was cut, their tubans torn apart, then they were brutally murdered and finally burnt down.

This clever pattern leaves very little doubt that the violence had been extremely well organized by men who were experts at the game.

### **I. Repeated Visits:**

To make sure if the victim was dead, the mob came back repeatedly to the place of violence like birds of prey. In Bhogal the crowd came at intervals, first at 11 A.M., then at 2 P.M., to see if the shops had burnt out. In Jehangirpuri also it returned to see if the men who had been burnt were dead.

### **J. Slogans:**

In the over-all planning and organization, the slogans had a very important part to play and they were mainly 3 types used all over Delhi.

The object of the slogans was to incite the people to take revenge by playing upon Mrs. Gandhi's greatness and the next moment reminding them that she was dead.

Thus frenzied cries of;

'Indira Gandhi Zindabad',

'Indira Gandhi Amar Rahe' and

'Jab tak sooraj-chand rahega

Indira tera naam rahega',

Were followed by;

'Khoon ka badla khoon se Lenge'

and

'Sardaron ko jala do, 'loot lo', 'Sardaron ko mar do' and

"Hindu-bhai, Muslim-bhai, Sardaron ki kare safai".

## **K. Rumours:**

The method of spreading rumours was subtle. It was done in three phases.

In the first phase, on 31st October, only one rumour was spread in the evening. Its sole intention was to arouse and incite the spirit of revenge, which was otherwise being fed by the incessant showing of the dead body of Mrs. Gandhi on the TV and the continuous announcement of the two killers.

The media even suggested the course of revenge when the voice of the excited mob at Teen Murti came through clear and sharp in the TV : "Khoon ka badla khon se" ("Blood for blood.").

The rumour was that Sikhs all over Delhi were celebrating Mrs. Gandhi's assassination by distributing sweets, dancing the 'bhangra' and bursting crackers as in Diwali. This spread like wild-fire though nobody had seen either the distribution of sweets, the dance or the Diwali illumination. Yet, all, even highly placed educated men and women accepted the rumour as true and were getting furious.

In the second phase, on November 1 after the Gurdwaras had been burnt down and a number of Sikhs burnt alive or hacked to death, to prevent or remove any kind of sympathy or compassion for them, three kinds of rumours were floated.

People heard that "every Gurdwara was an arsenal" and "weapons which were used by the extremists were found under the Gurdwaras when they were burnt down".

However, in truth, no weapon was found in any of the burnt Gurdwaras. The second rumour was more forceful – after the killings of Sikhs had been put into

effect – that the "Sardars were coming to attack armed with swords and they were just round the corner".

This second rumour sprouted into several harmful rumours – like "Sardars will kidnap children", 'they will attack at night' – as a result people became afraid of Sikhs and parents living in several bastis deposited their children and their few possessions in the houses of their employees on November 2.

In Chandni Chowk, the police were the author of an interesting slogan 'Raat Hamari, Din Tumhara.' It might have been begun as a cynically humorous statement since the police, being refused a share in a big Sikh jewellery shop, had broken the safes in the Saraf Bazar and had helped themselves with cash and jewellery; later this was twisted and was supposed to have been a threat coming from the Sikhs – the meaning being clear.

The third and most dangerous rumour was spread on November 1 night, round about 10.30, after the carnage was nearly complete in the central areas, that the Sardars had poisoned the drinking water. Strangers rang up to give the news and warned people not to drink or use the Corporation water. This had a terrific impact and worked up even a secular minded Hindu against his Sikh neighbour.

In the third phase, on November 2, when trains arrived in Delhi with dead bodies of Sikhs, the rumour was spread that Hindus had been killed in Punjab and that their bodies had been brought to Delhi by the Jhelum Express from Punjab. It was necessary to substitute the truth by fiction to keep up the anger against the Sikhs because the extermination had not yet been completed in the Resettlement Colonies.

While analyzing the sordid episode of this genocide, one sees an invisible hand moving the pieces on his chessboard with remarkable dexterity; the most powerful leader of the locality calls the meeting, allocates to different selected

groups different duties – like identification of Sikh houses, supervision and execution of the plan; determines the size and the composition of the mob and the areas from where it should be brought, settles the payment for each killing and most important, decides on the sequence of the attack – the Gurdwaras always being the first target. It was a double-edged strategy.

To the killers, the Gurdwara was supposed to be the arsenal of the Sikhs and so the precaution had to be taken to destroy it first.

To a Sikh the Gurdwara is the symbol of everything he stands for – his faith, love, courage - once the Gurdwara falls, he falls with it. It was to break him first morally, then physically- so also the Gurdwara was attacked first everywhere and then he was murdered.

The slogans were also selected meticulously and the rumours were carefully spread so as to justify the carnage.

## Chapter IV

### Nature Of Violence

What stunned every thinking person in the Capital this November was not merely the spread and duration, the meticulous planning and organization of the violence and the controlled and instigated assault on the Sikhs, but more, it was the very nature of the violence, its relentlessness, its unspeakable cruelty, the uninhibited sadism it displayed.

It is not unlikely that a large number of these human monsters who participated in the crimes were similar to those who had been let loose a few months ago on the people of Nagpur, creating a reign of terror there.

Many were the recipients of bank loans- the much-pampered Congress-I thugs who are immune to discipline and having powerful political patronage are still moving about freely; those who are supposed to be the protectors of life and property of the citizens either dare not touch them or are with them.

Ajit Singh, a survivor, resident of Friend's Enclave, Rajendra Park, in a statement given to us in Gurumukhi has described how the mob was determined to do violence and to kill. "I am doing service in Delhi Cloth Mills. My son named Hari Singh (age 29 years who was a truck-mechanic was at home on 1.11.1984 when a mob of 150-200 persons armed with lathis, iron rods and bricks came here.

First they broke all the doors of the house. We all were sitting in the room inside. On hearing the noise, we came out. Someone in the mob said that if we cut our children's hair, they would not harm us. As soon as the elder son came out, the mob attacked him on the head with lathis and rods. He was injured

and fell down. Then they kept beating him. Then they attacked me and my wife.

We were seriously wounded. Then the mob took out our things and put them over my son. Pouring the oil over the belongings, they set our son on fire. Seeing this incident we fainted. When we returned to our senses, the mob had retreated. Then I hid myself in neighbour's house which was being constructed. Nobody was living there.

On the afternoon of 2nd November, the mob had burnt the household items in the room. My wife stayed at home and she witnessed the entire incident helplessly."

Some recently widowed women in East Vinod Nagar narrated to us how on November 1, two busloads of Congress-I men clad in Khadi kurta and pyjama had come from UP border, ostensibly for 'Darshan', but walked down the colony from the highway and led the hoodlums already assembled there in arson and killing.

The trail of misery left behind by these men before they departed has been described by Mr. Ram Jethmalani (Surya, November, 1984) when he visited that area on November 2 with a number of Supreme Court lawyers:-

"As we turned into Vinod Nagar an unidentified body was lying across the road. A few passerby who were present informed us that the body was of a Sikh who had been shaved and burnt with kerosene and that he was a resident of Vinod Nagar. We made our way into Vinod Nagar. Charred bodies were visible in the lane unmistakably of the Sikhs, the long hair had been cut and was lying around the bodies; iron rods had been pierced through their backs and they had obviously been burnt by kerosene or petrol. A male corpse was lying in the verandah of every house. An inconsolable woman with her child narrated how mobs of hundreds had entered her house and despite all her pleas for

compassion had killed and burnt her husband, taken away her gold earrings and bangles and her clothes, utensils and radio. The mob had come from the Resettlement Colonies. Some of them were identified as belonging to the Gujar community-the violence was the work of outsiders who had been manipulated to demonstrate their muscle power .... They were insitigated by the local Congess-I elements into a frenzy of resentment and suspicion against the Sikhs."

The method of killing these men also was horrendous: crying, their widows described the deeply moving tragic episode to Jethmalani,"the mob while cutting their hair jeered and mocked at them chanting 'mona mona mona'; they were ordered to keep dancing while the mob laughed wildely; it threw kerosene at them and gloated at their bodies burning, at the human being shrieking in horror and pain".

The killers must have been especially selected for they meant to kill and came back again and again to verify if anyone was still alive. In Nand Nagri men were dragged out, mercilessly beaten, their heads shaved, beard shorn, then as if it was a game of football, they were dashed on the ground and rolled in gutters, when nearly unconscious they were thrown into the flames to be roasted alive like pigs.

In some areas lighted sticks were held over their heads-doused in kerosene, and they burned like human torches. Sometimes the methods of torture was changed and the men died burning ignited limb by limb.

According to Jog Singh of A-I Block, Nand Nagri - 14-years old apprentice in a factory manufacturing scooter-glass vacuum mirror, who had escaped death but was severely burnt – described how cruelly seventeen members of his joint family had been killed.

Of the seventeen, eight were children, one of them an infant 1 1/2 months old, two women who were raped before being killed and seven men. First their



houses were stoned; since they did not come out, the mob set fire to the house. When some came out and tried to escape they were caught, and one of the men was thrown into the fire, he died- burnt alive.

The other six were beaten unconscious with iron rods; then four of them still unconscious, but not yet dead, were stacked on the seat and the floor of the rickshaw which was owned by the man who had already been burnt alive. The other were dragged some distance with the help of ropes, one end of which was tied to them, the other end to the rickshaw. Finally the rickshaw was set ablaze alongwith all the six men.

In this Resettlement Colony the kerosene depot owner supplied diesel, and the policeman who was present there instead of controlling the mob instigated the crowd to arson and murder; everywhere there were Congress-I men abetting the killing. The weapons used were spears, iron rods and lathis with spikes attached to them.

In this colony the women were raped after the men were killed; a young girl was gangraped and the brutes pushed an iron rod up her vagins, she is still lying in a critical condition. In Nand Nagri there were those rare instances where neighbours were killers. Two women of this colony were involved in arson, looting and inciting the mob to kill their neighbours.

One of the women- a nurse of flat number xxx incited her newphews to kill residents of flat No. xxxx and looted the house with them. The other was xxx who with her sons xxxx and xxxx and her daughter and, daughters-in-law looted the houses of Sikh residents and burnt them.

In Tirlokpuri where practically the entire Block No. 32 was wiped out, Vidya Kaur 30, (a pregnant woman who gave birth immediately after the violent death of her husband) in her affidavit to Delhi High Court which has been filed in a writ petition, has narrated how viciously the killers went about their

business. For safety her husband had cut his hair and as he was crossing over from the terrace of the house where he had taken shelter earlier to another neighbour's house – he was recognized by Salim, a notorious criminal of the area. "He crossed over to terrace where my husband was and forcibly dragged him to the adjoining terrace and beating him pushed him down and the mob which had collected there with their swords, knives, spears and iron rods and tins of kerosene fell on him and poured kerosene on him and burnt him .... I rushed out towards the street corner and to my horror saw the burning body of my husband. Salim and several others I could recognize. Meanwhile the mob was growing in size, many were dancing in joy as they were burning people live. Some were shouting: " Where are the fresh rats? We will hunt them."

According to another victim Pratap Singh (28), who used to run a provision store in Block 32, Tirlokpuri, and who was totally blinded by the shower of iron rods on his head, the mob shouted : "They want Khalistan – let us create Khalistan here!". The mob closed the exit and entrance to the lanes and destroyed the Sikhs.

Gurdeep Kaur of Block 32/117 Tirlokpuri also has in writ petition in Delhi High Court, described the horrifying nature of the violence that destroyed her two sons, one son-in-law and a nephew on the morning of November 1.

The mob broke open the door of her house and pulled the 4 men out. Bhajan was hit on his head by an iron rod and sprinkled with kerosene and set on fire at the door; Man Singh was hit with a dagger and burnt; Gulab who had managed to hide himself in a neighbour's house was pointed out by Draupadi's sister Tello and beaten mercilessly with lathis, after which finding that he was still alive the mob electrocuted him. Her youngest son Pritam was hiding behind her.

They pulled him out and dragged him to Jagga's house where he was killed. Before pulling him out," the mob began pulling and tearing my clothes and in a little while I was standing naked. After this they raped me in front of my son".

In Hari Nagar Ashram ( Chapter II on " The Carnage") the man was first dragged out, beaten up and his left thigh slashed off – the stench of fresh blood had drawn the street dogs and in presence of the gloating crowd they began to tear it and gobble up the flesh. The man, in indiscernible pains was doused in kerosene and burnt alive.

This was the nature of the violence, unchecked and allowed to be committed in the Capital on men whose fathers and brothers had shed their blood and are still shedding for the defence of this country, which is much more theirs as anyone else's.

This new dimension was added to the grim tragedy – killings on railway trains. Every train to Delhi on Friday (November 2, 1984) carried death. Scores of bodies were found in compartments when the trains arrived and many more were burnt on railway tracks and platforms on the outskirts of Delhi. (Statesman, November 3, 1984). Col. Anand's family did not know for several days that he had been dragged out of the train and killed though he was in uniform. Surjit Singh of Tirlokpuri, a Young greaser in the Railways never came back from Saharanpur where he had gone on duty; weeks later his Hindu colleagues informed his anxious parents how he along with three sikh passengers had been pulled out of the train in Loni Raod, beaten up and burnt with diesel oil. Their bodies could never be found. Sometimes bodies were discovered after days but never returned to their relatives. This happened when the battered bodies of Gyani Kuldep Singh and his son were found behind AGCR's office.

In Palam village, people saw nine Sikhs dragged out of the Ahmedabad Mail and hacked to pieces which were strewn all over the railway line. Where was the railway police or the police incharge of the Palam Thana? These are questions which every administration which is still functioning or supposed to be functioning must answer. And this leads us to examine the behaviour of the police and the role of the administration during the violence.

## Chapter V

### Police Lawlessness

Neither the general public nor the survivors have good words to say about the behaviour of the police. Acts of devotion to duty were few and far between and they did not receive the support of colleagues. According to the replies to our questionnaire by the victims and their neighbours in 19 riot affected areas of Delhi, 86 percent of the neighbours said that the role of the police was very negative.

A significant proportion (15 to 30 percent) among both the categories said that the police joined the looting and killing. 54 percent of the victims said that no response came from the police when they were contacted for help.

That the police had full knowledge of the carnage that swept Delhi from the morning of November 1, is documented in the form of FIRs lodged by the police themselves at various Police Stations in the capital.

In Mangolpuri Police Station the first FIR was claimed to have been registered on November, 1, 1984 at 1.30 p.m. under section 147/148/149/302/307/395/397/427/436 I.P.C. as No. 174 (Annexure I) but it was not sent to Metropolitan Magistrate immediately on the same day as required under law. Instead it was sent on November 7. This FIR lodged by Rajinder Singh, SHO, Mangolpuri Police Station states that there was strong anger and resentment among the residents of Delhi because of the cruel murder of Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India on October 31 by two of her Sikh Security Guards. Therefore, on November 1, mobs were gathering at several places in Mangolpuri in defiance of the law, roaming about, looting the houses, Gurdwaras, shops and properties of Sikhs. The Mangolpuri Police Station had received reports of such violence from Block Nos. B, C, D, I, J, Q

and Avantika Colony. The SHO also stated in the FIR that he would immediately require a gas squad, fire brigade and a photographer and that is why he was sending the report immediately to the concerned high official through special messenger (a motor cycle-rider).

The following questions are relevant in this connection:-

1. What kind of actions and measures did the concerned police officials take in order to control the extra-ordinary situation which they themselves noticed vide FIR No. 174 dated 1.11.1984?

2. Why was the police not able to mention the names of the victims and accused in the said FIR? Did the victims refuse to give such information? And if they did give, why were the criminals not immediately arrested?

3. What did they do to investigate the number of deaths and incidents of loot and arson?

4. Why did the police not send the copy of the said FIR No. 174 immediately to the concerned Metropolitan Magistrate on 1.11.1984 itself and why they sent the same to him on 7.11.1984, inspite of the fact that in the said FIR the police noted that the special report was being immediately sent to the concerned higher officials by special motorcycle rider?

5. To which higher officials was the special report send by the motorcycle rider messenger and what action did they take?

6. In the said FIR the SHO indicated the immediate need of a gas-squad, fire brigade and photographer. Did he get these? And if he got, how and at what places was the said gas squad was used? What kind of photographs did the police photographer take and at which places?

7. How is it that between 1.11.1984 to 11.11.1984, the Mongolpuri Police was able to register only three FIR's i.e FIRs No. 174,175 and 176?

8. And of the concerned police officials did not perform their duties in the above matter as required under law, why was no action taken against them under section 217 and 221 of the Indian Penal Code? (Section 217 and 221 IPC provide punishment for public servants who intentionally disobey directions of the laws to save guilty persons and intentionally omit to arrest them.)

These questions are relevant for almost all the police stations where such riots occurred. The various facts mentioned in this report clearly show that the concerned police officials did not conduct themselves as police officials but functioned as criminals, and the government connived at their behaviour.

The FIR No. 176 (Annexure 2) at Mongolpuri Police Station is dated 11.11.1984 which was lodged by one Gurdip Singh, r/o Q-6/118, JJ Colony, Mongolpuri, Delhi. In this report Gurdip Singh has pathetically narrated how his two brothers Kulwant Singh and Rattan Singh were dragged out from the house and burnt alive on 1st November, 1984. He has also narrated how Davinder Kaur, wife of Kulwant Singh was raped by the miscreants. In his report has given the names and addresses of the miscreants and the witnesses.

When we tried to contact Gurdip Singh we found that he had left Delhi for Punjab. We discovered that while Gurdip Singh together with his family was in Narang Colony Camp near Janakpuri he made various repeated efforts to get the police to apprehend the said miscreants who were roaming freely in the locality. Instead of being apprehended, the miscreants were allowed to threaten and warn Gurdip Singh and his family of dire consequences. Gurdip Singh saw no alternative but to escape to Punjab with his family for safety. Now the fate of his complaint can be well gauged. This is an example of what is happening to similar complaints.

In fact, one of our members visited Narang Colony camp on 16.1.85 and several Sikh refugees showed him the copies of complaints sent by them to the police in which they had mentioned the names and addresses of the miscreants but still the said miscreants were roaming around freely as no action was being taken against them. Consequently these refugees were feeling apprehensive about their own safety. It appeared from their faces as if they were living in an alien land and not in their own country.

In Sultanpuri Police Station, FIR Nos. 250 (Annexure 3) and 251 were lodged by the police themselves . FIR No. 250 is claimed to have been registered on November 1, at 3.45 p.m. while FIR No. 251 is dated November 3. Both these FIRs were, however, sent to the concerned Metropolitan Magistrate on November 9. These FIRs are similar to FIR No. 174 dated November 1, 1984 of Mangolpuri Police Station and also speak of the intense anger and resentment of the people of India over the cruel murder of Indira Gandhi by two Sikh Security Guards and the consequent large-scale arson, looting and killings.

What is significant about the above FIRs lodged by the police themselves is that none of them mention any names of suspects or criminals as a FIR should. It is most likely that they were filed much after the incidents, so as to cover up the gross negligence of the police. This would explain why the FIRs reached the relevant Metropolitan Magistrates so late, in some cases after a week.

In Kalyanpuri Police Station, two FIRs Nos. 422 and 423 were lodged by the police on November 1, 1984. The first was lodged at 1.30 p.m. and received by the concerned Metropolitan Magistrate on November 3 at 5.30 p.m. The FIR No. 422 lodged by some constables who were on patrol duty at Pandav Nagar Bus Stop. According to them, two or three Sikhs were indulging in argument with one non-sikh at 1.30 p.m. on November 1 in front of Patparganj Road. The non-sikh was telling the Sikhs that they had killed "our" Prime Minister and therefore, the people would take revenge on them. At this the Sikhs are reported to have become angry and shouted loudly that they would finish

everyone who would try to damage their Gurdwara. Soon there were heated arguments. A large number of Sikhs and Non – Sikhs began to assemble and then the two groups attacked each other. In spite of the best efforts, reportedly of the duty constables, they could not control the angry mobs who started arson, burning and looting. The constables lodged the FIR seeking more help to control the crowd. FIR No. 423 also speak of general violence. It is significant that neither of these FIRs speak of any killing.

That the police was negligent in carrying out their duty and in giving due protection to the life and property of the Sikhs in clearly revealed by FIR No. 425 lodged at Kalyanpuri Police Station on November 2, 1984 by the Assistant Commissioner Police of the area. The ACP complained against the SHO of Kalyanpuri Police Station and two of his colleagues, the duty officer and the motor cycle rider, that these three policemen were witness to the spate of incidents of loot, arson and killings on November 1 and 2 in Blocks 32 and 34 of Trilokpuri.

That the victims informed the police about the violence and sought protection from them. However, the SHO, so the complaint ran, failed to give any protection to the lives or property of Sikhs, did not inform any senior police officials about the incidents, did not register any case against the criminals who had indulged in arson and killings and also did not make any arrest. Hence the ACP lodged the FIR against the SHO under Sections 217/221 of the Indian Penal Code for not making arrangements for saving the property of the Sikhs in this area.

The above FIR is significant because it is not only a clever attempt to cover up the inhuman and brutal negligence on the part of the Delhi Police in general, but also it is a clear attempt to find some scapegoats in the lower-rung of the police hierarchy for the criminal negligent displayed by the top police officials as also the political leadership.

On enquiry one of the suspended police officials informed that the lower officials had duly sent such reports of the incidents within time to higher



officials, and they were merely scapegoats to cover up the negligence of their superiors.

The least damaging comment on the police can be that they were "silent spectators" when gruesome killing or burning of Gurdwaras or looting of houses and shops were taking place. In Sultanpuri, on the morning of November 2, when the mob set ablaze every house in Block C-4 and started beating and burning the male Sikhs, the police officers waited in the nearby lanes but did not come to their rescue.

But were they really mere "silent spectators"-just apathetic, neutral ? We shall quote a few instances of their active involvement in different areas of the capital – such as Sultanpuri, Jehangirpuri, Trans-Jamuna, Dayanand Colony (Lajpat Nagar), Trilokpuri, East Vinod Nagar and New Delhi.

SULTANPURI: The Sultanpuri SHO, accused of torturing Wilson, the balloon seller of F-7 jhuggis, who subsequently died, was no "silent spectator" when he rushed to C-3 Block to disarm the Sikhs and arrest them as they were resisting the attack of a huge mob which had already allegedly burnt the Granthi alive.

A policeman is alleged to have shot down the Pradhan of Sikh community while two other constables are reported to have actively participated in the murder.

JEHANGIRPURI: In Jehangirpuri, on the morning of November 1 the police were heard by the victims, saying "Tumhare paas chhattis ghante hain. Jo karna hai, kar lo" ("You have 36 hours. Do whatever you wish to do"). Some victims and neighbours in 'K' Block, Jehangirpuri, testify to the active role of the police in burning down the 'K' Block Gurdwara.

## TRANS-YAMUNA (from Nanaksar Report)

(1) The officer of the Yamunapuri/Yamuna Vihar Police Station went to C-Block, Yamuna Vihar around 4 or 4.20 p.m. on November 2, and told the mob that it had the rest of the evening and the night to kill the remaining Sikhs.

(2) The police officials of the Khajori Police Station who told the mobs early morning of November 3, that they had 3 days to kill the Sikhs, but not still completed the job.

(3) On November 1, four policemen on duty in Gamri told a large crowd at around 11 a.m. that they had 2 days to finish all the Sikhs or else the Sikhs would finish them.

(4) When the Army entered Vijay Park, Maujpuri, looting was going on. In the mob were three policemen from the Seelampur Police Station.

(5) On the morning of November 4, another police official of the Yamuna Vihar Police Station took a group of thugs to a house in Khajori Colony. He broke open the lock on the pretext of searching for weapons and then allowed these hoodlums to loot the house.

LAJPAT NAGAR : While 26 Sikhs were rushing to the Dayanand Colony Gurdwara on the morning of November 1, for protection against the 500 strong mob, chanting slogans, 4 policemen were instigating the mob when they burnt the Gurdwara. These policemen were heard saying, "Delhi is burning, and what are you doing?"

TRILOKPURI : The police came, peeped in the homes in Block 30 and left. "Whenever people complained about killings for protection" writes Vidya Kaur in her affidavit, "they asked us not to worry. Later the police directed the mob

to where the Sikhs were hiding." "Ous ghar mein Sardar Chipe hain, nikal bahar karo" (Sardars are hiding in that home, drag them out). The mob continued pelting stones and hurled abuses- "We will rape their women". Some women addressed them as brothers and begged them to spare them. They said in front of the police, "we are not your brothers. We are your husbands. We will kidnap you tonight," and so they did. The number of young women missing is very large; the police so far have not been able to trace them.

On the flyover joining Bhogal to Ashram – 20 policemen just sat on, looking, when six Sikhs were beaten to death.

IN EAST VINOD NAGAR also when the anti-socials first began to assemble in the early morning of November 1, one of the residents who had hidden her neighbours and saved their lives, said, that suddenly some police men turned up; seeing them the mob was on the point of retreating when the police called them back and said "Why are you going back?" Encouraged, the whole lot of them returned and waited for the Congress (I) leaders to arrive by bus.

NEW DELHI: In the case of Sikh taxi driver killed in the house of DMKP leader, Ram Bilas Paswan, the Patriot (November 2) reported that after the crowd set fire to the house and the garage, " a few minutes later a jeep packed with policemen came down the road and the 'guardians of the law', instead of controlling the situation, cheered and exhorted the men and sped away".

Were the police always present either when things were happening and people were asking for protection? Did they not quietly disappear when to quote only one instance, the mob was surging forward to destroy the Trilokpuri Gurdwara in Block 36? In some of these settlement colonies, violence continued for over 48 hours, the attackers came back again and again to verify if the houses had been reduced to ashes, if the burnt man was actually dead.

In Sultanpuri after the first attack on November 1, at 3 p.m. on the Gurdwara in A-4 and the killing and burning of the Granthi and of other male members, the mob came back again next morning, and those who survived were killed in a subsequent attack.

Would such verifications and constant visits by hundreds of hoodlums have been possible if the police had been there?

But sometimes their presence helped the criminals as it did in Sultanpuri where along with the criminals the police removed the bodies of the dead and every evidence of the crimes. The bodies were not handed over to the relatives- all their requests were refused. It is still not known how their bodies were disposed of. These actions were taken deliberately, in order to minimize the number of dead reported to the public.

On Thursday, November 1, M.M.K. Wali, the then Home Secretary who is now Delhi's Lt. Governor, said that the number of people dead in the country was 10 of which 5 were in Delhi (Times of India, 2nd November). On that day police sources put the figure at 35 killed in the East District of Delhi alone (Indian Express, 2nd November).

On Thursday itself Wali is reported to have expressed confidence that by Friday evening, November 2 the situation would be brought under control. He was of the view that passions roused get spent in two days. (Indian Express, 2nd November). On Sunday, November 4, Wali said, "the situation is much better. I hope it will be totally controlled by the night."

On being pressed he gave the official figure as being 58 dead. That day the mortuary had taken on a grisly appearance with bodies piled high on four trucks after the space inside was filled (Statesman, 5th November). Wali said on Monday, November 5, that the Press was giving exaggerated accounts of the death toll and incidents but on November 6, he announced the number of deaths to be 599 (Patriot, 7th November). On November 11, however, the Hindustan Times published a table giving the official number of those killed in Delhi as 325.

The exact figure of the dead will never be known – all that one can see is the disconsolate widows whose number is not less than 1300 and 4000 desolate orphans.

But perhaps the cooperative, rather protective and encouraging attitude of the police vis-à-vis the criminals has some logical explanation – such as unwritten orders from the political patrons to give green signals to the miscreants to go ahead and then give them support. "Whether there were political instructions not to implement curfew restrictions imposed on Friday, November 2, in earnest to allow the 'darshan' at Teen Murti or not is unclear", commented the Statesman (3rd November), but the general consensus among public, everywhere – especially after the non-implementation of the curfew order and the shoot-at-sight order – was that 'Sarkar kara rahi hain' ('the Government is behind this violence') while the miscreants were openly bragging " Police hamare saath hai" (" The police is with us").

Even the 'deployment' of para-military forces of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the Border Security Force (BSF) announced by the Government on Wednesday evening were no where to be seen. " I have called CRPF and BSF control rooms every 10 minutes", said a duty officer at the Nizamuddin Police Station, "but each time I am told that there is nothing that can be done." (Indian Express, November 2)

So everything was done leisurely – the killing, the arson, the looting ; liquor flowed like water, tea was served to the 'vigilant' police sitting on their stools, jokes were shared, there was a lot of laughter and glee, trucks came and went loaded with booty – dispatched unhurriedly to safe place – car loads of well dressed men stopped for a while to supervise if things were going according to plan. To a real 'silent spectator' walking helplessly it was like a slow motion shooting of a gory film.

It will be only fair to quote an important police officer (name not to be mentioned) that whenever instructions were sought for from the above, there was silence. There was one lone police officer in Pandav Nagar called Vinod Sharma whose name was mentioned with deep gratitude by the relatives of victims; and because he had behaved as a police officer is expected to, he was summarily removed.

The fact that 20 percent of Delhi Police- who happened to be Sikh – was removed and locked up during the entire period of the violence, was a clear indication to the police of Delhi how to deal with the Sikhs. The excuse for this action was that the Sikh police-men were not safe, hence it is for their safety they had been put away. This brings to the mind the 'police protection that had been ordered for Jaiprakash Narian; wherever he went – even when he was in his own house – the police had to be there ' to protect him from the ' hostile people'.

There is no disputing that fact that the administration has collapsed during that period : the emergency telephones calling the police and the fire brigade never replied ; the looting went unchecked; the power connection had been cut off in Tirlokpuri so that the women could be raped in darkness, no DESU man could be contacted to set the line right; there was none from Delhi Municipal Corporation's Water Supply office to reply to anxious questions if the water had really been poisoned; shops and markets remained close for 4 days; in several localities no milk was available, nor bread; even as it is Delhi has been a very unsafe especially for woman but these days with hundreds of bad characters roaming around with no policemen in sight there was a feeling of instability and grave insecurity even if he was a Hindu belonging to the majority community. It was total chaos.

One shudders to think what would have happened if some wicked power had chosen those days to attack Delhi-the capital of India.

The Police Commissioner having all the powers under the statute to pass orders for shooting down miscreants, stood helplessly by like any civilian and saw the big Gurdwara in Sadar Bazar burning. Distressed, when he rushed to consult Lt. Governor of Delhi, this high official could not summon necessary courage to impose curfew and waited till Rajiv Gandhi gave his clearance.

According to the Statesman, a proposal to impose curfew in the city was made shortly before noon; until 6 p.m., Thursday, November 1, no decision was taken because no decision could be taken unless cleared by Mr. Rajiv Gandhi (The Statesman, November 3).

The people have been realizing with a sudden shock the rot that had set in during the last 10 years and the depth of damage in the system of our administration. When the one person alone holds the reins of control and all power is concentrated in one hand and nothing is expected to move without orders coming from that one source of power, it is only natural that the vast and expensive machinery of the Government should get rusted, and there would be a total degeneration in the system of governance which has become an abnormal monolith.

It did not require a seasoned administrator to realize that day that priority demanded the presence of the largest possible contingent of police force in those localities where there was anarchy and not in front of the Teen Murti House in such numbers. It is also worth noting (Patriot, November 1) that "one Army brigade consisting of 8000 men and another 1000 personnel from the Navy and Air force were to line the route of the funeral."

So there was no shortage of either army or police personnel. But only a three-men police force arrived in the secluded colony of Tirlokpuri around 6 p.m. on November 2, despite repeated information of the carnage to the authorities. It could do little to dispel the palpable menace in the air. (Indian Express, November 3).

It was not the police constables alone, all the high officials from the Commissioner of Police to the ACPs were concentrated in the Teen Murti House.

At Thursday's wireless log, Police Commissioner Mr. Subhash Tandon's day was spent at the following places - Teen Murti Bhavan, Police Headquarters, Raj Bhawan and back to Police Hqrs. (The Statesman, November 3).

While the Additional Police Commissioner, Mr. Gautam Kaul, was at Teen Murti till about noon – born out by the log book as well as Doordarshan Cameras. In the afternoon he visited Gurdwara Rakabganj and the house of a colleague attacked by a mob in Mahadev Road. In the evening he attended meetings. (The Statesman, November 3).

That going around the troubled city – particularly visiting again and again the far flung Resettlement Colonies – was an integral part of the Police work which was totally forgotten. The capital was virtually handed over to the goondas, the mafias and the criminals – it was their raj for full 4 days.



## Chapter VI

### What Is Communal Riot?

Nearly two months and a half after the holocaust, one can assert with confidence that unlike the Calcutta killing of 1946 and the killing during the partition of the country, the recent killing in Delhi was not the outcome of communal hatred. It has, indeed, brought out the worst in certain human beings after they had been instigated; but it has clearly and spontaneously brought out the finest in others.

On the evening of November 1, one of our members went to Lajpat Nagar-II to enquire about one of his Sikh friends. When he tried to enter Lajpat Nagar from Defence Colony side, he saw barricades and some young men at the entrance who did not allow our member to enter the colony. There were some burnt vehicles and shops. On persuasion, those young men allowed our member to enter.

When our member moved in a lane on left side, he saw two Sikhs moving about freely, among others. He inquired from one Sikh as to what was the situation there. The Sikh replied there were some looting and burning in the main market and on the main roads in the morning and all the residents were bewildered and confused up to afternoon as they did not know from where and how the outsiders came and committed all the mischief. But since afternoon the residents, Hindus and Sikhs together, had organized themselves into joint defence committees and had decided not to allow any outsider inside the colony or do any mischief.

Our member then went to the house of his Sikh friend who told him that the miscreants had tried to enter the colony but the residents had repulsed them with joint efforts. He further told our member that the Hindu young men he saw at the entrance were member of the joint defence committee and were guarding the colony.

The above instance was not a solitary one. Further investigation revealed that such joint defence committees had spontaneously sprung up in various localities. These acts of communal harmony and courage were not few, as The Times of India dated November 3, 1984 rightly reported:

#### 'RAY OF SUNSHINE IN DARKNESS'

"... hindus in colony after colony decided to form their own protection squads against the gangs of plunderers that were running amuck."

"Disgusted at the utter failure of the police and the government to protect the lives and properties of innocent Sikhs, Hindus assured their Sikh neighbours that they had nothing to fear and patrolled the areas throughout the night."

"Some of the colonies where such squads were formed were Tilak Nagar, Hari Nagar, Shiv Nagar and Janakpuri in West Delhi."

" There was an ironical situation that developed around B-2 block of Safdarjang Enclave last night when two volunteer groups from Janata Colony nearby clashed with one another mistaking one another to be hooligans. Both groups were patrolling the areas armed with lathis. Some of the men wore scooter helmets. But just as they were about to attack one another, some CRPF men on duty at the spot raised their guns to fire. It was then that the groups realised that they had same aim of protecting house and shops from desperate raiders."

#### 'ORGANISED GANGS'

"Irate residents, both Hindus and Sikhs told reporters that none of the people who attacked their houses and shops seemed to be from their own colonies. In fact they were not even of communal nature. They seemed to have only one

objective – that of looting their establishments. The plunderers looked the type of people who lived in villages and resettlement colonies and were highly organized."

"In fact their operations seemed to be so well planned out that they knew exactly which shops and houses in a particular colony were owned by Sikhs and, what is more, even which vehicles. As soon as residents got over the initial shock of the attacks and realised that the police could not be relied upon at all despite all the assurances that were being broadcast both on All India Radio and Doordarshan they decided to protect Sikhs themselves."

"In the government colony of Sadiq Nagar where some petrified Sikh families had shut themselves up, Hindus went over to their houses to reassure them and offered them food. " A Sikh who went over to a West Delhi colony to rescue his 'niece' was absolutely stunned when he found that a group of Hindus belonging to a particular party was already protecting her. They told him to let her stay there as she was secure."

The report gave further description of similar activities in various other colonies.

A team of Supreme Court advocates including V.M. Tarkunde, Ram Jathamalani, Soli Sorabji, Ranjan Dwivedi and others visited five effected colonies of Trans-Yamuna on November 1 and 2. In all the localities the neighbours of the victims told the same story – that they wanted to save and protect their sikh brethrens but were helpless against the highly organized mobs having superiority in number.

In Kalkaji, Hindu and Muslim neighbours helped in salvaging valuables from the burning Gurdwara because they all respected it as a place of worship. Thousands of Sikhs have been saved by their Hindu friends at the risk of their being killed and their houses being set on fire by the threatening mobs. It is

interesting that the protest of the poor, the much maligned jhuggi- jhopari dwellers, at the request of the Sikhs, kept with them in safe custody some of the articles which could be salvaged after the burning of sikh houses. With the renewed rumours of outbreak of violence before the election-day they asked the Sikhs to remove those articles elsewhere as they felt they were marked men and this time the goondas would attack them and everything saved would be lost.

According to replies to the questionnaires sent to neighbours in 19 different affected areas of Delhi 72 percent said that the first news of violence they received was that Sikhs were being attacked; 58 percent of them tried to contact their Sikh friends and neighbours; a similar percentage (59 percent) of the neighbours said that they tried to help the Sikhs in various ways and suffered threats in the process. 34 percent gave them shelter in their own houses, 28 percent provided food, medicine, clothes etc., 12 percent of the neighbours contacted, visited relief camps and organized peace committees, another 12 percent informed the police about the violence, 68 percent of the victims questioned said that their neighbours came to their rescue.

In several refugee camps all the survivors said that the violence was not communal but, many said, that it was instigated. To our question if he felt was a communal violence, Jeet Singh – a survivor in the Pandav Nagar Gurdwara who has lost everything and every-one excepting his little son – simply said " No, no, not communal, a Brahmin couple has taken my little boy to live with them".

In Janakpuri camp an old man said, " it was the local bad characters or in many cases political workers who pointed the houses and property of our community." (Statesman, November 4, 1984). Some would say " my mother was Hindu, or my brother has married a Hindu or in one family, we have Hindus and Sikhs. All these people had completely ruled out the riots as communal.

In Tirllokpuri – one of the worst-hit areas – it was the 5 Muslim houses in block 32 which stood as buffer between the killer and the Sikhs and it was Kadir, a Muslim who saved the life of Joginder Singh (See chapter II) at a great personal risk. In Vinod Nagar East also it was a Himachal Pardesh Hindu who dragged the taxi driver and his kids out virtually from the jaws of death.

It was again a brave Hindu woman being completely alone, who hid her neighbours so cleverly and with such presence of mind that the mob which entered her house in search of Sikhs and examined the photographs of her husband and daughter to verify that she herself was not a Sikh, could not find there prey and left but came again and again to check up but failed every time. The tension she had gone through was clear on her face, but to her joy the people she had saved were all sitting around her.

All such instances of neighbourly compassion made a veteran Police Officer remark , " in true communal riot, the neighbours would have taken part. Thousands would have died. There is more looting than killing". About looting there is an interesting observation by another Police Officer, " Achha mal sab upar, Baki dikhane ke liye"(the good stuff goes upstairs. The rest is put on display). The connection between upar (above) and niche(down below) becomes clear from the following episode reported by the Indian Express. "

Over 300 people suspected to have looted the property have been rounded up by the General district police. The Congress-I leaders including the local M.P. Mr. Dharm Das Shastri came to the Karol Bagh Police Station to protest against the police action." (Indian Express, November 6,1984).

Some would concede – "Yes, there were Hindu neighbours who pointed us out to the killers, some looted and burnt our houses. But they did that not because they were Hindus or Muslims and we were Sikhs. They wanted our things – radios, videos, watches or some foreign gadgets some of us had."

One of the characteristics of the communal riots is that it might flare up suddenly on some small pretext but it never stops as suddenly as the violence in Delhi did. No one on earth can control inflamed passions of hatred once they begin to rage in human hearts or stop two or more warring communities from drawing blood; even when the intensity of the riot gets less it never completely subsides, and erupts sporadically in some corner or other for days together and takes its own time to die down. Secondly, no communal riot is one-sided.

In the Delhi violence, the Sikhs handed over their kirpans and knives to the police officers both in Sultanpuri as well as Mongolpuri: as a result they were butchered – completely defenceless as they were returning home from the thana. They themselves gave their weapons, all in good faith, to their neighbours in Tirlokpuri who had visited them late on 31st October night to advise them not to take part in Prabhat Pheri next morning.

All knew that was one of the essential features of observing Guru Nanak's Birthday. Those men were slaughtered next morning with those very kirpans and knives. Whenever they have tried to defend themselves or protect their Gurdwaras, they were either killed or arrested on the plea that they were indulging in communal behaviour. What were the weapons for – if not to be used for self-defence!

That the violence did not take a communal turn was not because of lack of effort to give it that colouring. All the rumours were directed to that end. Those who have been striving after a Hindu Rashtra were active.

There was a letter from Hindu Suraksha Samity dated 27 October 1984 addressed to "Dear Sardaron" which was shown to a volunteer by an important person of the Balasheb Gurdwara; it held out the threat of forcible shaving of head and beard so the Sikh might be converted into Hinduism as retaliation for shooting down the Hindus in Punjab.

There was the story narrated to us by some distinguished Sikh families in M.G. High School Camp of the eerie voice exhorting all Hindus to 'arise awake and kill'(Utho, jago, maro) every midnight in Shivaji Park area weeks before the violence erupted.

But after the Violence, these votaries of communalism – though few in number – may claim some success. For example, in the walled city, looting and burning of shops did take place on the main roads, but the houses, the shops and families of Sikhs remained intact inside the mohallas and lanes.

However, our members noted with heavy heart that soon after the riots, heavy iron doors were immediately constructed at the entrance of every mohalla or lane, which opened at the backside of Gurdwara Sisgunj in Kinari Bazar, Chandni Chowk.

The mohallas in Dariba also put up iron gates. On the other hand, the backside wall of Gurdwara Sisgunj, which used to be only six feet high before the riots, rose to about 14 feet high soon after. No wonder, our government seems to be quite adept in promoting disharmony, disunity and disintegration.

As if all these were not enough, the highly communal Congress-I advertisements were issued against Sikhs. These might satisfy the Hindus longing for a Hindu Rashtra and capture soon Hindu votes – but they also light the flame of a true communal frenzy.